

# **Panel # 4 – Advocacy as a Tool for Economic and Business Development**

**Disclaimer to reader:** This document contains the comments provided by participants at the Minority Business Development Agency Summit held on July 6 – 7, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Participants provided input on strategy, enforcement mechanisms, and legislation that may assist minority entrepreneurs in the future. Note-takers memorialized the comments made at each of the tables. These materials are being provided in raw data format and are for informational purposes only. The views expressed herein are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of MBDA or of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 1**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Advocate for greater enforcement of current laws that impact minority businesses
- Increase MBDA grant funding for its MBECs, MBOCs and NABECs. This is where the true economic impact is taking place.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

No comment.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

No comment.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

No comment.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Minority business groups with similar focus should share best practices such as letter writing campaigns, petitions, etc. that can be sent to lawmakers.
- Create an organization that can legally lobby on minority business issues.
- Form a coalition among several minority business groups (U.S. Hispanic Chamber, National Black Chamber, etc.) to have one voice to lobby Congress

**f. Any other comments: No comment.**

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**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 2**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Connect policy makers with industry advocates, so that laws avoid creating obstacles to minority business growth.
- A single minority business advocate organization should be established. MBDA should lead this group and help create an environment to make it happen.
- One federal certification for minority business should be established.
- Or one universal standard for certification should be adopted.
- A new size standard for small, disadvantaged business is needed.
- The economic impact minority businesses have in a community need to be measured to make the business case for the importance of minority businesses.
- Force prime contractors to work with American, minority firms rather than contracting to foreign firms abroad.
- Procurement goals should be tracked in real time and not at the end of the project in order to allow for immediate changes.
- Enforce federal contracting goals managed by state and local governments using federal funds.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- See above.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- All the minority business advocacy groups needs to have unity.
- Organizations need to have collective efforts over individual approaches.
- MBDA should review the Women In Public Policy organization model and see if a similar model can be implemented representing minority businesses.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 3**

**Moderator:**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- MBDA needs to provide more frequent and broader data on how minority businesses impact the economy in order to demonstrate their importance.
- All organizations advocating on behalf of minority businesses should also use economic data to make their case.
- There should be one voice among all the different organizations.
- If you want equality for minority businesses, all minority groups need to be included.
- The White House needs to make a statement of commitment to the importance of minority business and the importance of minority businesses to the recovery of the economy.
- All messages need to reinforce by economic data and a robust legislative record so that we can respond to and build arguments.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 4**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

- Groups need to come together and use one voice. Fighting for different issues doesn't help us collectively.
- Ideological unity is not needed, just a unity of purpose. It is not necessary to agree 100%.
- We need to focus on minority businesses going global.
- The Black Economic Union started by football players is a good example. They involved everyone down to the consumers. Advocacy was a part of their every day message.
- Minority business leaders need to find consensus and advocate together. The fractured approach doesn't work.
- Minority business and small business have similar concerns. It's not just discrimination, it's a system geared towards larger companies.
- For example, Boston Consulting Groups did a study that is found on the Kaufmann Foundation's website. It looks at small business and minority business vs, large businesses. Minority business problems are the same as small businesses problems. Does that mean we should advocate capacity building?
- Need marketing tools for minority businesses. If you can demonstrate your product is better than it will sell.
- We should ask the question: How are other firms that are growing faster and stronger, different?
- Not everyone is good at business. The strong survive, perhaps advocacy isn't needed.
- There has to be a voice in Congress to get funds other businesses are getting.
- We need advocacy to make sure that the money that gets to the states gets to the right place.
- If all the organizations in the room went to Congress with one voice we could be successful.
- MBDA or another organization needs to take a leadership role in defining the strategic direction—a strategic plan that offers an opportunity for stakeholders to pick and choose what to support.
- Minority businesses need focused advocacy not argumentative and militant advocacy.
- MBDA should lead the advocacy agenda.

- MBDA should take advantage of social networking and technology to get everyone on the same page in order to inform people of the strategic direction.
- Minority businesses don't know when important decisions are made on the Hill and need to learn when and how to advocate.
- Need to advocate for policies that increase capacity

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- No comment

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 5**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Advocate and educate for minority businesses to affect change in small ways.
- Minority businesses need to work in partnership with other organizations.
- Minority businesses need to promote economic development for minority communities.
- Minority businesses need to find the key players that provide the most impact on legislation.
- Use experts and the brightest minority business to advocate on the community's behalf.
- Many government agencies have public committees that minority businesses should consider being on to be able to create an impact.
- Take advantage of all opportunities to have your voice heard.
- Grassroots pressure on agencies and policymakers is effective.
- Use the message that in order to keep our jobs in the US we must protect the small and minority businesses.
- Change the term "minority" to something that reflects the economic value of the group - "diversity"; "emerging sectors"; "Strategic growth sectors" (SGS);

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Content of advocacy has to have good content, based on information and analysis to make the compelling arguments
- Splintering of groups must be addressed.
- Political splintering must be healed - building strong minority businesses are more important.
- We should modify the discussion away from social and historical discrimination to focusing on the growing segment of the population. Advocate with that message. Talk about the minority group as a whole. It is an economic issue.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Hammer home the message that it is critical to support minority business
- Promote the value of the minority business—not as a mere set aside.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Few schools get the importance of MBEs like Tuck School does. Perhaps Tuck School should talk with other university presidents.
- Enlisting academia to make the case to advocate impact of minority businesses - and incorporate this information into the curriculum.
- A fast track training on advocacy should be a program at universities.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Programs that exist must be promoted and implemented more effectively.
- We need more partnerships and alliances with other groups
- Less fragmentation among the advocacy organizations.
- Advocate for support for MBDA funded projects. For example, free space for a MBDA center, and other in-kind support and contributions.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 6**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

- Politicians respond to pressure from the bottom up. I've seen success when companies actually write to Congress and help them realize they are interested in their work.
- SBA & MBDA produces valuable reports and the subject and content of these reports strengthen our advocacy efforts.
- Form knowledge and management groups within companies to assess what works for your company.
- Small businesses are dependent on government programs.

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- MBDA needs an increase in funds since it has been cut in half since 1971.
- Need to have the group of MBE advocates to come up with only ONE message to deliver to legislature. We need to streamline the MBE message.
- More summits/forums (online and offline) are needed to pool ideas and come to consensus to the MAIN MESSAGE—with a coalition, there is increased leverage.
- Publicize the effects (successes) of advocacy - show people that our efforts are not wasted so others will join in the cause
- Educate the community so they understand that advocacy costs money, time, sacrifice. Some ridicule advocacy as an investment.
- Educate the minority business community on the advocacy process
- Expand/draw the importance of the MBDA customer relationship management initiative to small businesses

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- The minority community needs to understand the value of advocacy at the state level.
- They should work with local assembly members and state senators on their needs locally. Have them (assemblymen and senators) also advocate up.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Supplier development outreach is important, but can cost a lot of time and money.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Need to continue to promote proactive collaboration between business and government for synergy.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 7**

**Moderator: John Iglehart**

**No comments**

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**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 8**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- SBA is crucial to contracting and government opportunities; we should revamp their programs and band together as advocates. The SBA 8(a) net worth cannot be over \$750,000. But this goes against the very point of the program by creating a ceiling of wealth.
- Congress has to do more oversight on minority business participation. MBDA and SBA need to do more monitoring in overseeing the federal agencies. They also need to be given more power to conduct oversight.
- MBDA and SBA need to contact the director of acquisition for the Department of Defense.
- MBDA's role could be expanded to help build capacity at minority businesses. MBDA needs more funding in order to help build capacity.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Could create a letter-writing campaign to make an impact with congress, state legislators, and state senators regarding the advocacy of minority businesses from a top-down approach.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Make attractive terms, equity investments in order to encourage primes to partner with minority businesses.
- Private sector needs to provide flexible bonding.
- Need more mentoring programs on a larger scale
- Fund the Tuck of Georgia.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Higher education institutions need to develop a curriculum for advanced degree programs such as supply chain management.

The degree programs for supplier diversity should be comparable to the degree programs for business.

- Universities could help research minority business development data.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- If all the different minority chambers advocated under one voice, the message might actually be received.. These chambers should come to some consensus and then go to the federal government as one voice.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment.

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 9**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Need to promote education w/ success stories & best practices.
- Help communicate better outreach for where minority businesses should go for T&A support.
- The government needs to do a better job of publically listing Government and funded government projects, programs and resources.
- Federal agencies need a culture change in transitioning a message for better communication, transparency and action.
- Need contractual racial disparity studies from federal, state, and local agencies. Sample urban areas for the number of MBEs getting contracts from these agencies.
- Need advocacy group to pressure Congress to address disparity studies.
- We need action from the President's administration supporting the MBDA funded centers.
- We need research that is persuasive, legal activities that are persuasive, and representatives that are persuasive.
- We need a national industry based group that can advocate for minorities in congress (i.e. National Minority Business Association). The association can do research on problems, identify best practices, recommend policies, monitoring report cards and hold agencies accountable, and take legal action as needed.
- We need a separate group to advocate for MBDA at a national level.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- States should conduct more public hearings to clarify and address Stimulus programs with MBE's

- Infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, construction, were promoted in the Stimulus package but not IT, professional resources, human services, discretionary services were not highlighted.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- We need to work collaboratively to help MBEs find specific investment and contract opportunities.
- We need to work collaboratively to make sure solicitation waves in the stimulus package don't leave out minority businesses.
- Minority chambers need to tap into their communities and broaden their reach to help our minority businesses broaden their access.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Work with universities in the new growth areas and develop business incubators.
- Assist awarded researches in developing collaborative engagements to work with minority businesses or emerging minority entrepreneurs
- Universities could track performance outcomes to show how funding is actually awarded to non-minority vs. minority contractors. They could also produce a report card.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Most of the Community-Based Organizations that are focused on the construction industry have overshadowed MBE's. They have little bearing with audiences that want to participate and easily lose interest.
- Community-Based Organizations could become better vehicles for helping to get updates out on what is working and what is not. They could also be the liaison between government Stimulus funding and minority contractors.
- Community-Based Organizations could help identify viable

areas and sectors where jobs could be created.

**f. Any other comments:**

- Construction and transportation projects in the stimulus package do not have opportunities that adequately encourage job ready projects to translate to urban and MBE's vendors.

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**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 10**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Minority business enterprises need a stronger presence on Capital Hill. First, there needs to be a consensus of advocacy groups. They need to build upon commonalities and present to the Hill with a cohesive, united voice. Splintered voices will yield splintered results.
- Form a consortium of already existing advocacy groups.
- Empower **business owners** by bringing them together, but allow them to decide and manipulate agenda to address their own needs. Allow federal government build the forum, but let **business owners** drive discussion. The business owner's expertise is essentially the business owner's strongest advocate.
- Dollars should be provided in MBDA's budget for advocacy on the local level. SBA has an advocacy department so MBDA needs one too.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- There should a structured approached in tackling issues as an advocacy

group. There should be a best practice model to be followed in regards to successfully advocating on behalf of certain groups. Without structure, there is no clear defined end-result to be evaluated against success or failure.

- Technology should be used as a communication tool in mobilizing the MBE's to advocate.
- Minority businesses need to network with each other. Create your own publicity.
- MBEs need to be aware of the existing advocacy groups and the positions they advocate already on the Hill. Rarely do a majority of MBEs understand what "their" position is on certain issues being debated on the Hill. Their advocacy groups don't always convey the message to their constituents.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 11**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

No comment

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- Better coordination of constituents to present their case. AGC is well organized in their attack of minority programs.
- People need to be mobilized and demands need to come from the bottom up.
- Make a business case for doing business with minorities using profit motivators.
- Recognize that the business case to prime contractors is keeping the people in power who support their businesses.
- Get on the winning team so you have a voice on the problems.
- Include questions on the Census that can tap ideas from the community that can impact policy on MBEs.
- Require businesses to provide feedback on all of the barriers and challenges on every contract they go after.
- Create a national business census through every government organization.
- Immediate action by Sec of Commerce to use discretionary funds to reactivate 25-30 business development specialists nationwide to

immediately work to implement the Stimulus Package.

- MBDA should provide information to each project center on all of the contracts in their state originating from Stimulus dollars.
- MBDA working with other Dept. of Commerce agencies like the International Trade Administration should be tasked to identify minority firms that can expand their businesses internationally.

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**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 12**

**Moderator:**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Place MBDA office in Federal Building of each state to advocate MBEs.
- Give MBDA the power to enforce or encourage state, local and private companies that receive federal funds to contract with MBEs.
- Why is the DBE program under DOT? Why is the 8(a) certification program part of SBA? Recommend that both the DBE and 8(a) programs be part of MBDA.
- Give MBDA the power to enforce MBEs for Federal funding.
- Hold SBA accountable for a certain amount of MBE contracting per year (minority and women-owned businesses).
- There should be an OSDBU in every government agency on all levels (Federal, state and local) and should directly report to MBDA the results of MBE participation in contracts funded by the government agencies.
- All OSDBUs should be required to post all the contracting opportunities to MBDA web Portal. This would capture all the outstanding solicitations set aside for MBEs.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Create an advocacy forum that will consolidate fragmented efforts, prioritize common issues and advocate with a united front. Advocacy forums should meet at Summits and afterwards, move agenda and give a progress report at the next Summit.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Force large corporations and ask the government to empower small

business development.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- Advocacy is a critical tool for minority business development. However, authority or empowerment coupled with advocacy, will make this critical tool just that much more effective.

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**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 13**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Collect testimonials of MBDA Clients and share those with elected officials and other government agencies to get support.
- MBDA must present a united voice to Congress.
- Organize a MBDA regional accountability summit to showcase clients served and success stories to congressional representatives in the region.
- MBDA should be able to advocate on the behalf of MBEs across the country.
- Need a DC to Minority Main Street site (issues clearinghouse)
- Develop Issues Data Center for collecting issues and possible solutions
- Develop a marketing trip to Congress to present minority business issues, take MBE's with us.
- "Minority shop talk" - MDBA should organize a town hall for congressmen to understand MBE issues.
- Let people know that it doesn't cost extra money to do business with MBEs. What is the return on investment in doing business with MBEs?
- Continue the MBDA Summit process.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Let people know that it doesn't cost extra money to do business with MBEs. Explain the return on investment in doing business with MBEs.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Let people know that it doesn't cost extra money to do business with MBEs.
- Explain the return on investment in doing business with MBEs. Help corporation understand this for their own.
- Use corporate training programs to do an advocacy training program for MBEs.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Structure an activity to bring all the minority chambers together to advocate for all minority group instead of just their own organizations.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 14**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- MBDA is not able to lobby, so MBDA needs to participate with other associations that can lobby.
- Hispanics are outstanding at this conference because there are none. It is disappointing that the largest segment of the minority population is unrepresented at this conference.
- Need combined advocacy by all minority organizations collectively as well as individuals to drive common messages and support outcomes that benefit all minority groups.
- Create a value center.
- We need to stand for each other.
- All MBE chamber presidents walk into congressional leaders together.
- The issue of bribes needs to be addressed in contracting.
- Need common, ethical set of practices for all businesses. Including minorities and non-minorities.
- Need added enforcement and accountability.
- Need to discourage predatory MBEs who take advantage of their own.
- Larger businesses need to have ethical value for their sub-contractors/vendors.
- Congress needs to hold themselves accountable to their own rhetoric.
- Don't allow legislation to take away advocacy tools.
- Require one tenth of one percent of all procurement to be set aside for an independent review of Congressional performance in the areas of minority supplier diversity. This cannot be changed or altered by Congress during the budget process.
- We should support National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship for all high schools including tribes. Bring back

trade schools.

**At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- No comment

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 15**

**Moderator:**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- MBDA needs to be more of a central repository for collaboration, strategic alliances and partnerships. More resources should be dedicated to this effort.
- MBDA HQ should leverage the centers more to the private sector as a network or "connection" for larger companies.
- MBDA needs to market our success stories to get bigger firms interested in what we do and hopefully to help other MBEs.
- MBDA needs marketing and outreach dollars equal to SBA programs.
- A common agenda should be developed from a number of different advocacy groups to educate Members of Congress.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- MBDA centers should be the center of MBE advocacy activity for the local area.
- Centers should have more resources for MBE advocacy.
- MBDA centers should work with their local government officials to educate them about minority business issues.
- Groups should bring in constituents to talk about their business model to local and state elected officials. Have them tell the stories and their issues.
- Train minority business professional in advocacy. Knowing their elected officials, how to get a meeting and how to speak to them on their issues.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Private sector should connect MBEs with other businesses.
- There is no vehicle to foster collaboration, strategic alliances and partnerships. There needs to be a central database or place.
- Community banks in collaboration with local government officials (Miami MBEC story in Miami Herald) were able to help local MBEs get loans. Earned media and political pressure help private sector move forward on issues.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- MBEs and MBDA should partner with organizations with similar goals to support similar goals. National Community Reinvestment Coalition and Corporation For Economic Development are examples of organizations with similar goals and have an advocacy infrastructure in place.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 16**

**Moderator: Bobby T. Jefferson**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Education is a primary concern for Minority Businesses.
- Minority businesses should be included in the government's overall economic strategy.
- Economic empowerment of minority businesses is critical to the economy.
- MBEs need to understand trade policies of other countries and the government.
- All minority businesses should have the opportunity to participate in congressional meeting to voice their concerns.
- MBEs should establish a working relationship with the federal, state, and local elected officials.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- See federal level for similar suggestions.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Increase the funding for MBDA Funded Centers and organizations that reach out to the minority business community and provide information and education as it relates to business concern.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Encourage the use of educational institutions to assist MBEs on developing their business in the global market.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Identify and involve community leaders to lead action efforts on behalf of MBEs.
- Embrace the media to champion advocacy actions related to removing barriers affecting MBEs.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No Comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 17**

**Moderator:**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- Often times, U.S. federal agencies are set in their ways and it is hard for MBEs and minorities to get help.
- Get MBDA more funding so it can advocate/lobby for minority businesses.
- MBEs need to write to their Congressional representatives.
- We need to advocate for Congress to enforce the rules/programs that already exist.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Need better outreach on the resources available.
- Minority businesses need to be educated on advocacy and need to advocate for their position before appropriate bodies of government.
- Need to find issues of substance and content, that carry the most impact. Some minority groups need to get to the lowest common denominator and team up to lobby together.
- Need to show other MBES that advocacy is important and how it can help them. We also need to train them to advocate for themselves or for a group.
- MBEs need to show up to local, state government meetings and learn the process.
- Integrate a bottom up approach to educating MBE firms at grass-roots level.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of grassroots movements on elected officials.
- A organization needs to ignite and mobilize MBEs.
- Train MBEs in advocacy such as how to meet their congressman, how to talk to your elected officials and walk them through **the halls**

**of the legislature.**

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- MBEs need to get private sector legal help to take full value of their legal rights.
- Need the legal structure to succeed in our goals.
- We need to have 3rd party verification of legal findings.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Mobilize students at universities/law schools to lobby/advocate for MBEs
- Have a COOP program to help out for free on behalf of MBEs because many advocacy groups are just looking for a fight.
- Have a business student help prepare a business plan for the MBE.
- Use pro bono legal help from local bar association.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- Need various community based organizations to team up on common issues in order to get a unified message across that gets support from decision makers.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 18**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

- MBDA and/or minority businesses should have been included in the dissemination of Recovery Act funding.
- NSBA.biz needs more exposure.
- Exam the process of incorporating veteran contracts.
- MBDA needs to educate congressional members on current and relevant information that the extended MBDA network can follow up on later.
- MBDA needs to disseminate national talking points on current issues effecting minority businesses
- There is a disconnect between MBDA and the MBE's.
- MBDA should provide advance briefing on the topics being presented.
- MBDA should facilitate more in-depth discussion by providing materials in advance.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- Collaborate with civil rights group on important issues that need to be advocated.
- Need to incorporate social media to disseminate information.

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- Groups need to join together for advocacy.
- Advocacy group leaders need to suggest more specific topics for national discussion.

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- Higher education should study ethical business behaviors.
- Higher educational institutions should play a role in training MBE's on their role of advocacy on the "Hill"
- MBDA should partner with business schools on ways to increase entrepreneurship in youth.

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- MBE's have to be more familiar with current and developing laws effecting industry sectors.
- MBE's have to meet with state and local governments to have an impact on laws before they are enacted.

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

**Panel Number: 4**

**Panel Name: *ADVOCACY***

**Table Number: 19**

**What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)**

**a. At a Federal Level:**

Formulate community groups which have an active interest and incorporate:

- Information
  - Meet decision makers
  - Legal Process
- (i.e. Greenling Institute)

Develop a Congressional relationship and support for drafting and sponsoring a bill that will address specific economic development laws affecting minority businesses (i.e. deployment of capital to MBEs).

The directive for advocacy for deploying funds to MBEs and minority participation has to come from a highest level, the President of the United States and his cabinet.

**b. At a State/Local Level:**

- No comment

**c. In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- No comment

**d. In partnership with Academia:**

- No comment

**e. In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

Create a twofold approach which integrates:

- Information/pressure (could include legal)
- dialogue with key policy makers

(classic case is Greenlining Institute - Study/put pressure on banks to increase minority goals/legal suits)

Greenlining is a coalition of over 15+ community organizations.

Formulate a faith-based relationship with economic entities to develop specific projects (i.e. Joseph Education Program Entrepreneurial Development for Small Businesses).

**f. Any other comments:**

- No comment

Panel Number: 4

Panel Name: *ADVOCACY*

Table Number: 20

What advocacy activities and actions do you recommend can be encouraged or taken to promote the economic development and growth of MBEs? (Please provide answers from (a) through (f).)

a. **At a Federal Level:**

- **Need to Unify in Common Goals** - We need to present a common front instead of a fractured message. Grassroots organizations (African American, Hispanic, Asian) need to come together and address the common issues. Overview of discussion: We need to decide on a common agenda and present to a legislator who can impact change. We need to provide compelling statistics to present the best case possible and pool enough funding to make the presentation relative. Finally we need to conduct the presentations during an appropriate and relative time (election cycle).
- **Pooling Financial Resources** - Minorities need to pool resources for advocacy to be able to educate legislators.
- **Budgeting:** More funding for MBDA and centers.

b. **At a State/Local Level:**

- **See Federal** (same)

c. **In partnership with the Private Sector:**

- **Obtain Private Sector Sponsorship:** Use current relationships (Benita Fortner) as a model and expand private partnerships.
- **Information Sharing:** We need to get the word out about what MBDA does. We need to define and educate.
- **Networking:** People at the table should share contact information (business information shared) and work together to advocate minority business growth.
- **Teaming:** Need to encourage entrepreneurs that a small percentage of a growing company is better than 100% of nothing.
- **Growth and Mentorship:** Need to encourage growth and mentorship

d. **In partnership with Academia:**

- **Advocate Minority Hiring:** Need to advocate more minority hiring at Universities (University of Missouri as an example).
- **Role Models in the Classroom:** Need to encourage minority role models to participate in entrepreneurial classes.

e. **In partnership with Community-Based Organizations:**

- **Advocate Minority Hiring:** Need to advocate more minority hiring at

Universities (University of Missouri as an example).